

DR HARRY STANTON - Higher Education Research - Laboratory

Came from being senior lecturer in Education and Psychology at Flinders University.

Aim to set up a department which would try to improve the teaching of the University. So the work was with staff: private consultations, and research into departments, sometimes at request of departments, faculties, the professorial board.

Also to assist staff to use audio-visual materials more effectively.

Every other Australian university and most C.A.E.s. had such a unit. Some more successful than others. Barbara Falk at Melbourne University was the forerunner. Most units quite small.

Staff have Stanton and one other to look after educational technology side.

Original title of unit (Teaching and Learning Unit) changed because it had a "primary school" image - to H.E. Research and Laboratory.

Reached about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of academic staff.

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Q. Did you wait for people to approach you?

S. Has changed his view and now believes all new appointees should be required to do a course of this kind.

"Very few people criticised us who actually came to our seminars or used our expertise - virtually all came from people who had never used us and did not know what we could do."

The aim was to create better conditions for learning within the University. "I would sit in on lectures and tutorials."

Would also run courses e.g. on evaluation, small-group techniques, use of audio-visual materials, course construction etc.

Publicity involved visiting every department, meeting

individually in the S.C.R., publishing a newsletter called The University Teacher, which has a high international and Australian wide reputation, but not very well received here.

115 Before the unit was instituted - the situation which led to the setting up.

130 The university system does not reward teaching.

"There is no pay-off for improving your teaching."

140 The research accomplished by the unit.

"I published a great deal." Small-scale research mostly on e.g. drop-out rate in an individual department; or comparable failure rates.

In one case the only thing a certain department was doing was "playing it honest" i.e. not manipulating ranks.

170 S. Had sent to Professorial Board - example of "getting nowhere". Disheartening to see that Professorial Board was not interested in improving education, only in budgets, students numbers and such.

180 There was a great deal of opposition on the Professorial Board to the establishment of the unit.

200 Did you have any direct contact with students?

"I made it my business to."

"Students were encouraged to come along if they were having difficulties with their courses which related to the way in which those courses were taught."

Helped students design a questionnaire...

[Need to assess students as well as staff]

235 When did doubts about success of unit start? Early (3-4 month after arrival). But senior dropping-off in last year - the phone

hardly every rings now.

The decision to close the unit came out of the blue, last year, just when we were going to move into new quarters.

Not so much a financial saving as a gesture to show the university was serious about Redeployment. And an easy target.

No discussion initially. Presented by the Standing Committee v. autocratically - some opposition in the Professor Board to the method in which it was presented as a fait accompli. It was terribly high-handed.

295 Consultant on Higher Education is now his title. Would have been "wiped" if it were not for strong tenure contract. Stanton would have been happy to go into either Education or Psychology - but both were overstaffed already.

320 Units of this kind are being closed down all round the world. Peak was early seventies, with expansion of staff then occurring. Stanton himself is now doubtful as to what this kind of unit can achieve.

345 Believes in in-service rather than pre-service training - but it must be taken seriously, probably must be compulsory.

Comparison with nursing training.

390 Stanton is in a position where he could withdraw and do nothing; but has set up - initially - an outside consultancy - charges fees, which the University gets; hopes thereby to pay his own salary as it were.

Views about the University. Reminded him of W.A. - very little zest or innovation - a comfortable guilt existence with students who would take very little, without complaining. Lacking in stimulation.

Some people have been engaged in research projects for years without producing anything. People should be far more accountable - - i.e. no funds if no results.

4.

Any areas of excellence?

Physics

Professor Scott )  
Professor Bloom ) individuals whose work is regarded  
Dr Waterworth ) highly overseas  
Professor Wendell Smith )

Adores the Tasmanian environment, so long as he can get away from it. Necessary to be constantly having contact with people in other places. Otherwise you become very complacent about a low level of achievement.

525 And yet our students in many cases out-perform mainland ones.

535 Relations of H.S. with Education Faculty. Almost nil.  
Ghetto mentality of Hytten Hall.

Summing up: a disappointing story.

H.S. says "it may be partly me".

Side 2 Achievement? Improvement in tutorials. Modifications in some peoples' lecturing techniques. The Newsletter.

014 End.